NEWS

Sen. Jason Lewis, Mass. Senate advance bills to combat opioid crisis, protect people with IDDs, and lower car rental costs

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State Sen. Jason Lewis joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate to approve three bills aimed at combating the opioid epidemic, protecting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs), and lowering car rental costs for residents. COURTESY PHOTO/OFFICE OF SEN. JASON LEWIS

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The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis:

State Sen. Jason Lewis joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate to approve three bills aimed at combating the opioid epidemic, protecting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs), and lowering car rental costs for residents.

The approved legislation expands protections for individuals using testing equipment to protect against fentanyl, updates an existing protection law to close an unintended gap for day habilitation participants, and changes car rental insurance requirements to reduce costs for Massachusetts residents.

“The Massachusetts Senate is committed to improving the quality of life for our residents by passing legislation that lowers costs and increases safety,” said Lewis. “These bills will secure safeguards for people in day habilitation programs, lower rental car costs, and help reduce the number of opioid overdoses and deaths.”

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An act relative to fentanyl test strips exempts fentanyl test equipment from the list of prohibited drug paraphernalia and expands liability protections to anyone who provides, administers, or uses the tests, including first responders. Fentanyl strips are a simple, low-cost, and safe way to help reduce the tragic toll of overdoses and make life-saving tools accessible to those who need them most.

An act to update Nicky’s Law ensures that the existing statewide registry that prevents individuals with substantiated abuse allegations from being hired in care positions includes day habilitation programs contracted by MassHealth.

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This update to Nicky's Law, established by the Legislature in 2020 to flag caregivers who were found to have seriously abused people with IDDs, ensures that participants in day habilitation programs are afforded the same safeguards from abuse as individuals in other care settings.

An act relative to affordable car rentals updates car rental insurance requirements to maintain liability coverage on a secondary basis, making rental companies responsible only if the renter is uninsured or underinsured.

By shifting primary liability to the renter's personal auto insurance, the legislation helps make car rentals more affordable and accessible for Massachusetts residents, reducing costs while maintaining necessary protections.

After passing in the Senate, the three bills now move to the House of Representatives for further consideration.

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FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in the 1920s, this iconic production is sure to leave the audience wanting more. Performances will

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Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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